

PATRICK MEEHAN
7TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA



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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3807

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

February 21, 2012

Mr. Howard Gruenspecht
Acting Administrator
U.S. Energy Information Administration
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Administrator Gruenspecht

I am writing to request an urgent assessment from the Energy Information Administration on how the closure of southeastern Pennsylvania's refineries is contributing to the current gas price spike.

As you know, late last year Sunoco and ConocoPhillips idled refineries in Marcus Hook and Trainer, PA, respectively, and Sunoco has plans to idle its Philadelphia refinery later this year. These three refineries account for half of the northeast's refining capacity, producing 315,000 barrels per day of gasoline in 2010, according to the EIA.

As my constituents in Pennsylvania are well aware, gas prices have spiked tremendously in the last weeks and months. According to AAA, the average price for a gallon of regular in Pennsylvania costs \$3.67 today, and is on track to reach \$4 per gallon "sooner rather than later." Pennsylvanians are used to higher gas prices in the spring and summer months, but the rise in prices this high, this early, is unprecedented. A month ago, the price per gallon in Pennsylvania was \$3.50, yet this time in 2011, a gallon of regular gasoline only cost \$3.19. Numerous news accounts have suggested that the refinery closures are a significant factor in the price spike, while some commentators have said the rising price of overseas crude owing to tensions in the Middle East is to blame. But with half of the refining capacity lost virtually overnight for a region that serves 62.5 million Americans in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, tensions in an already troubled region of the world cannot account for the entire differential.

The closing of southeastern Pennsylvania refineries has hit our region hard, resulting in hundreds of layoffs and an uncertain future for workers' families and their very communities. If the refinery closures result in \$5 per gallon gas this summer, not just for laid-off workers but everyone I represent in Congress, then they all deserve facts and answers. Thank you in advance for your timely attention to this matter and EIA's assessment of lost refinery capacity on the current record gas prices.

Sincerely,

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress